

POWER TIE

C.A. MACCINI

Like a kerchief of flame
My father slipped it round my neck

Stood behind me and looped it
Tight against my throat

And there it smoldered, glowing
Beneath dark flanks of my first suit

The color, he explained would overwhelm
Any seventh grade debater

Before me they would tremble
Wither like blossoms in the sun

Imagine my surprise
When the judges disagreed

And unanimously sided
With the girl who had no tie

No flourish and no talisman
No power shade at all

Only a skirt, black, a white blouse
And an argument

Definitive as water
Thrown upon a kindling fire